Southeastern centre against sexual assault:

An Annotated Bibliography of articles relating to disclosure of sexual assault on social networking sites

Lisa Smith

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Introduction

The overall objective of this project was to compile an annotated bibliography of literature to explore whether social networking sites encourage young people to disclose sexual assault. This annotated bibliography was compiled for South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (Secasa) in conjunction with Australian Catholic University (ACU) and is intended to be a ready resource for higher education researchers at Secasa and ACU who will be undertaking scholarly research into young people disclosing sexual assault on social networking sites. This annotated bibliography aims to provide a summery into the abundant research and literature exploring sexual violence, disclosures, and young peoples’ internet and social networking use and is in a format that can be updated where necessary.

In order to compile this annotated bibliography the compiler was given the following formulated questions and brief for the project by Secasa;

‘Do social networking sites encourage young people to disclose sexual assault?’

Everyone has darkness in their past, however, the difference for this generation of youths’ is that once something has become digital, it becomes accessible to millions and can leave a digital footprint forever.

How does being able to take things online change the events of youth?

Today, many previously isolated young people find social networking liberating and they feel empowered to ask questions they might not ask in ‘real life’. Young people are often able to access the internet and social networking sites with ease and gain information from a wide variety of knowledgeable sources.

Many concerns regarding young people’s participation in social networking sites and internet use have been raised over the last
decade by the media, government, parents, academics, educators and in some instances young people themselves. However, recent research suggests that there are many benefits and opportunities as well as risks for young people participating in social networking and using the internet in general. This is of particular interest to SECASA as they are interested in finding innovative ways to engage young people into their service.

It must be noted that the compiler has included negative and positive articles on internet and social networking use in this bibliography so that a variety of research findings, opinions and perspectives can be explored when considering how best to engage young people within service delivery.

**Focus and scope**

This bibliography was not restricted to articles in peer-reviewed journals and therefore includes articles from varied sources including; peer reviewed journals, empirical, exploratory and theoretical research, reports and newspapers articles.

The opinions and research findings in this bibliography vary considerably depending on research topics, findings, opinions and experiences and reflect academic and media perspectives. In some instances, within qualitative research the voices and opinions of young people are reflected.

**Format of the bibliography**

This bibliography has been formatted to include the following areas: Sexual violence and disclosure, Internet use, Internet disclosures, privacy and social networking. The bibliography has been formatted this way, as there is no direct research relating to young people disclosing sexual assault or sexual abuse on social networking sites. Therefore, this bibliography aims to provide related research so that the reader can gain understanding of young people disclosing
sexual assault/abuse and other personal information within social networking sites and further gain greater understanding of how social networking sites and the internet impact on young people’s everyday lives.

**Notes on compiling the bibliography**

The URL, keywords, outline of the nature and scope and the key findings or recommendations of the paper or article follows each citation within this bibliography. In some of the citations, the published article abstract is included in full or in part; however for the majority of cases the compiler has summarised the abstract and additional information from the article. In many instances the compiler has included a brief explanation why the citation is thought to be relevant to the SECASA project and question; Do social networking sites encourage young people to disclose sexual assault?’

**Themes and issues of the bibliography**

The compiler notes several themes from the examined research articles and literature. These include;

- Internet and social networking use is a balance of opportunities and risks
- Social networking sites and online communities have the forum to create an environment that is conducive to social and behavioural change through generating discussions
- Social networking sites can provide a safe opportunity for young people to disclose personal information about themselves due to perceived anonymity and fewer inhibitions
- Cultural shifts suggest that young peoples’ lives are now embedded in online communication and face to face communication may now be an extension of online communication rather than vice versa
Online communication can be therapeutic; young people are more able to write down feelings and thoughts rather than discuss them face to face.

Internet use and social networking pose threats to young people’s privacy.

Young people can be at risk of Cyberbullying and be exposed to greater amounts of pornography and sexual predators through engaging in social networking.

**Limitations of the bibliography**

Although research regarding social networking sites and the Internet is abundant there are no actual research studies or articles exploring 'young people disclosing sexual assault on social networking sites'. Therefore, this bibliography does not include any direct research on this subject and the reader must draw their conclusions from other related research.

Furthermore, it must be noted that the use of social networking sites by young people has generated much scholarly and media debate and will continue to do so when young people are at possible risk of harm. This bibliography cannot address or include all areas of risk or opportunities for young people engaging in social networking sites due to the abundant literature and research. Therefore, this bibliography is simply an insight into related research and literature and further research can be included as necessary.

**Further research**

Compiling this bibliography has demonstrated that there is abundant research on young people’s use of the internet and social networking sites. There is also a considerable amount of research regarding children and young people on sexual assault disclosures. However, there was no research found on any individuals disclosing sexual assault on the Internet. This is an area that warrants further exploration.
research due to the growing technology industry with which children are now a part of from a very young age. This bibliography has highlighted that young people do use online mediums to disclose personal information due to privacy and anonymity. Research conducted by Joinson (2001) suggests young people display a higher level of self-disclosure within computer mediated environments than they do face to face. Further he states that this is a highly reflective experience for young people. Valkenburg & Peter (2009) would further add that young people have far fewer inhibitions when self-disclosing difficult topics online.

The implications of these findings suggest that further research is necessary so that sexual assault services can understand how young people have embraced online mediums. Services can explore how to engage with this group in an innovative manner that goes beyond traditional service delivery. Enabling young people to seek initial support from sexual assault services through means that represents today’s culture (technology) and at the same time challenge traditional attitudes and assumptions of sexual assault.

References

**Sexual violence/ disclosure**

This paper is included in this bibliography as this paper explores student’s attitudes, opinions and experiences regarding sexual assault in NSW.

The authors undertook a survey of a wide group of people in February 2006 at an orientation festival of a Central Coast university campus in order to obtain data regarding students’ attitudes and experiences of sexual assault. The survey data was collected to form part of a needs assessment for the Central Coast health service’s Sexual Assault Prevention Strategy. The guiding principle of this strategy is that early intervention for sexual assault is essential in reducing the prevalence of sexual assault in communities. The data collected from this research will be integrated to inform future prevention strategies and local campaigns addressing sexual assault.

The survey aimed to assess the incidence of and beliefs regarding sexual assault of students visiting the orientation week festival on campus. This survey was based on previous research and knowledge that indicated a need for primary prevention initiatives relating to sexual violence. Young people are especially vulnerable as they are at a stage when they are negotiating their identities and values and beginning to form their own intimate relationships.

Both females and males completed a total of 134 surveys over a two-day period. The survey covered three main areas;

- Age and gender of participants, self-related knowledge and awareness of sexual assault

Keywords: Sexual assault, students, attitudes

URL;

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Opinions of a media poster campaign about sexual assault
Opinions about risk of sexual assault and beliefs about perpetrators.

Findings suggest that the majority of participants had good or excellent knowledge about sexual assault. Fifty percent of participants used the word ‘unwanted’ to categorise sexual assault (eg, ‘unwanted touching’ or ‘unwanted sexual advances’). Eighty three percent of females and seventy three percent of males were aware of someone who had been sexually assaulted.

Further findings from this study suggest that traditional myths and beliefs regarding strangers jumping from bushes to rape women were rejected and participants discussed a wide range of unwanted sexual contacts or behaviours.

This survey provides an insightful ‘snapshot’ of attitudes and opinions regarding sexual assault. However, it must be noted that a possible limitation of this research is that the views expressed in this survey may be of both victims and perpetrators of sexual assault.


Keywords; Sexual assault, disclosure, young people, safety

This paper is included in this bibliography as this paper provides insight into young peoples experience of sexual assault and the barriers they face when deciding to disclose their experience. This insight may be useful when considering why some young people
disclose their sexual assault experiences within an online environment.

This paper is an informative publication about young people’s experiences of sexual assault, including the barriers young people face when disclosing sexual assault, the disclosure process and how to respond to a young person disclosing sexual assault.

Much research has been concerned with young people and sexual abuse from those in positions of authority; this paper explores sexual assault between young people and acknowledges that new technologies (mobile phones, internet etc) are further contributing to acts of sexual assault.

Research within this paper suggests young people rarely use the terms ‘sexual assault’ or ‘rape’ to describe their unwanted sexual experience and often young people have difficulty naming a sexual assault incident. The author suggests this is for two reasons; relationships are presumed to be based on trust and traditional societal myths and beliefs can result in victims not perceiving an incident as sexual assault.

The author and other research within this paper suggest ‘disclosure is about support seeking’ and ‘not always a conscious decision or planned action’. A young person’s disclosure can often be a means of seeking information to decide how to respond or what to do next. Young people may also be seeking support to understand or validate their experience.

How a young person is responded to when disclosing sexual assault can impact on a young persons decision-making processes greatly. Young people have to negotiate many complex issues when disclosing sexual assault, these include; relationship with the perpetrator, fear of not being believed or being blamed for the assault, cultural factors, family values, the impact on significant others, peer or societal expectations and attitudes and stigma.
The author states ‘disclosure is not a one-off event but a process characterised by uncertainty’. Young people consider whom they can trust and the consequences and benefits of reporting. Research within this paper, estimates that only 15 percent of sexual assaults are reported to police. In contrast approximately two thirds of individuals that disclose sexual assault experiences do so to someone from within their informal support networks.


*Keywords;* Disclosure, violence prevention programming, physical and sexual abuse, youth directed disclosure

This Canadian explorative study purposefully analysed a total of 1,099 evaluation forms completed by youths following Red Cross RespectED violence prevention programs delivered to schools between 2000 and 2003. The 1,099 evaluation forms were selected for qualitative analysis as program facilitators identified voluntary, anonymous disclosures by youth participants. Disclosures included neglect, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. Additional data for this analysis included 27 interviews and focus groups to enable greater understanding of the context of disclosures and to engage youths and program facilitators in the interpretation of findings.

Literature reviewed within this paper suggests that although awareness of child abuse and other forms of youth violence has grown, the majority of abuse continues to go unreported. Furthermore, young children often do not have the language or the
understanding of abuse. Therefore young people are often unlikely to report their abuse for a considerable time, if at all. Other research within this paper suggests that children have difficulty finding situations in which privacy and prompts allowed them to disclose and that children are sensitive to the reactions of others. Research also suggests that youths are concerned with their anonymity and confidentiality after disclosing.

The most common findings from the evaluation forms when disclosure occurred, was that youths related the information they heard from the workshop/program to their own life experiences or to the experiences of others known to them. The findings raised concerns that disclosure by abused children and youths is still rare and that many incidents of abuse remain hidden.

Interviews and focus groups with youths provided further support that the majority of youths do not disclose their abusive incidents or experience. Issues raised by youths included, not being heard or believed, lack of words, lack of control, lack of knowledge or resources and perception of negative consequences.

This youth’s in this study explored what they perceived as the ‘optimal conditions for disclosure of abuse’ and include; being asked directly about experiences of abuse, access to someone who will listen and respond appropriately and having a sense of control over the process of disclosure, particularly regarding anonymity. In conclusion, many young people said that they had not disclosed abuse due to perceptions of barriers and consequences. The authors recommend that there is a need for community-based interventions that sustain the coping strategies that youths are already employing.

Internet use

This paper is included in this bibliography as the author explores the distinct differences between the analogue and digital age and the consequences this may have in the future for many young people whose lives become embedded in digital media.

When young people speak about digital media, they generally speak about it as something they use, a tool called upon to do a general or specific task or tasks. They show an awareness of digital media’s promise, its pervasiveness, even its potential misuse by themselves and others. They use the medium. It may not be perfect, but almost without fail they externalize it—it is apart from them, different, exogenous. It may change what they can do, how they can do it, even how they live, but it does not change them as such (though it may help them to change themselves). There is little, if any, explicit recognition among young people that digital media may not only be used by them, but in fact, may use them.

The author raises concerns that digital media can create severe embarrassment or cause real harm long into the future, stating negative digital media can persist over longer time frames and reappear at inopportune or unwanted moments. The author provides insightful examples of how digital media can cause distress long into the future of those that have engaged willingly and unwillingly in producing digital media. The author explores how digital media in the analogue age was expensive and time consuming to create, duplicate
and distribute and required more physical connections. Today these obstacles have been resolved with new digital media technologies, social networking sites and the Internet.

The author further raises concerns of storage and control of digital media, suggesting that potentially digital media is in the ‘hands of everyone’ once stored or distributed. Often the subjects of digital media have no control over storage or distribution and find the complexity of laws in this area difficult to address. For this reason the author explores laws that maybe of relevance; copyright and privacy laws.


*Keywords*; Family, teenagers, communication, technology

A US study has shown that families are spending less face-to-face time together, which coincides with the booming rise of Internet sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. New technology has changed the way families and households interact with each other leading to less cohesive and less communicative families. The Internet has become more engrossing and demands more time, which has resulted in disrupting personal boundaries more than any other technology, has ever done before. The author states that evidence suggests more people are worrying about the amount of time teenagers are spending online and more women rather than men said that they felt ignored by a family member on the internet.
British scientists have found evidence to suggest that people who spend a lot of time surfing the Internet are more likely to show signs of depression. However, it is unclear if the Internet causes depression or if depressed people are drawn to the Internet. Research suggests that some Internet users develop compulsive Internet habits and real-life social interactions are replaced with online chat rooms and social networking sites.

Researchers state that this study reinforces public speculation that over-engaging in online activities that replace normal societal interactions may be linked to depression and addiction. ‘Internet addicts’ spent proportionally more time browsing sexually gratifying websites, online gaming sites and online communities and all had a higher incidence of moderate to severe depression than normal users.


Keywords: Information technology, Internet, violence, discrimination, women, gender

This paper is included in this bibliography due to its exploration of the connection between information communication technologies.
(ICT) and violence against women. The author explores both the positive and negative impacts of ICT and offers suggestions on how the Internet can be used to shape stronger solidarities, share knowledge and advocate women’s issues.

The Internet can be a useful space with relative anonymity for women to disclose issues such as sexual assault; women can have their experiences validated through seeking support and advice or engaging in online communication with other survivors of violence against women.

However, ICT’s, in particular the Internet is a place where women can be violated, exploited, misrepresented and misunderstood. Pornographic content often portray women as voiceless victims in a sexualised manner and sexually orientated games portray female characters as passive, sexualised objects for male gaze or consumption.

Further, ICT’s have created different avenues of control for abusers, these includes spy software to obtain information regarding emails, web surfing and Internet communication. Instant messaging services and web browsers can leave a copy or record of conversations or recent sites visited. Abusers can intercept or redirect emails and also use webcams to monitor and transmit digital images through the Internet without women’s prior knowledge.

The author suggests that these new technologies are designed for men and manufacturers do not take into account how ICT’s are used to harass or exploit women. However, the author suggests that ICT’s can be used by women to benefit women to break the culture of silence regarding violence against women and address some of the negative impacts that ICT’s have on women.

Feminists and women’s rights advocates are shaping stronger solidarities, sharing strategies, knowledge and importantly defending women’s human rights, particularly in relation to communication, which extends to the Internet – ‘taking back the tech’. The author
states, ‘women are no longer passive victims of technological change but are adapting, theorising and protesting and creating online spaces to directly express the needs of women on global issues’.


*Keywords*; adolescents, youths, health, technology, internet

This study of 210 adolescents (27 focus groups) was conducted in Canada to explore how adolescents use technology for their health-information needs. This study identified the challenges faced by adolescents and highlighted some of the emerging roles of health professionals regarding online health services and adolescents. Findings suggest that participants frequently engaged with technology to interact with friends, school or to search information in relation to social concerns, medical conditions, body image, violence and personal safety and sexual health.

The research indicates Canadian health practitioners face many important challenges working with adolescents. These include the adolescent developmental stage (engaging in health risk behaviours), youths moving from parental control to establishing their own separate relationships with health professionals/services and engaging adolescents in health care and health promotion.

Adolescents are typically the early adopters of new technologies and the Internet in particular has provided innovative opportunities to engage youths, including those in rural settings and those opposed to traditional health education approaches.
The study showed that websites were the first place participants looked for health information. However, this study suggests that although the Internet is innovative in approach, there are difficulties for adolescents searching information. Filtering can restrict access for health information, studies found that 1.4% of health information sites may be blocked and when filtering is at its highest between 5 to 25% of health information sites may be blocked. Further issues raised were in regards to overwhelming information or the quality of information. Participants found that the quality of information found was in direct relation to their Internet search skills. Participants that used simple words to search were less likely to find in depth information.

This study concludes that Internet technologies can be used to augment the gaps when traditional venues for health information are less available. Many adolescents prefer information technology to traditional sources in situations that may cause embarrassment or conflict with parents or other adults. Adolescents also suggested that the Internet was a preferred option due to the perceived lack of judgement (from online service or information providers) and being accessible 24 hours a day everyday.


URL: [www.emeraldinsight.com/1066-2243.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/1066-2243.htm)

*Keywords:* Internet, Electronic media, user studies, customer satisfaction

This theoretical paper found that individuals use user generated media (UGM) in different ways to suit their own personal purposes,
this included; to fulfil information, entertainment and mood management needs; to participate through interacting with content and other users to enhance social connections and virtual communications and also to produce their own contents for self expression and self actualisation.

User generated media has become a social phenomenon and has fundamentally changed the world of communication, information and entertainment through its self-sustaining nature and rapid growth of audiences across the world. This paper explores in part how individuals engage with different UGM’s according to their varying motivations.

This paper suggests that 71 percent of American youths engage in consuming information and entertainment. This is to increase individual awareness and knowledge of one’s self, others and the world. Individuals are increasingly making use of sites such as Facebook and MySpace to learn how to make sense of things from their peers on many subjects.

Research suggests, that the positive aspects of Internet use can result in individuals having decreased loneliness, isolation and depression and an increase in self-acceptance, acceptance of others and wider social networks. Online interaction allows individuals to compensate for missing visual and auditory cues through the use of textual cues, allowing for a greater focus on content and enabling individuals to engage in more informal conversations and settings.

Involvement in virtual communities enables individuals to locate those who have similar interests and allows individuals to voice opinions or raise concerns. Many will get a sense of belonging and a shared sense that members’ will have their needs met as these communities represent places where individuals connect and interact, share interests/ concerns, support, sociability and identity.

UGM’s also enable individuals to achieve self-expression through blogging, posting and video casting as this allows control over
self-portrayal and control over the impressions others have of the individual. Sharing and posting information often becomes as valuable as the individuals familiar physical environments. Responding to content regardless of its emotional tone is an integral component as individuals will be more likely to post again (reinforcement model), therefore the sites become self-sustaining.


URL: [http://cdp.sagepub.com/content/18/1/1](http://cdp.sagepub.com/content/18/1/1)

*Keywords*: Internet, Internet effects, adolescents, well-being, social competence, social connectedness, self-disclosure

This article reviews a decade of literature on the consequences of online communication technologies for adolescents’ social connectedness and well-being. This article is included in this bibliography as recent findings: the internet-enhanced self-disclosure hypothesis is explored. Early research and literature suggested that adolescents that engaged in online communication had reduced well-being and reduced social connectedness to their social environment. Valkenburg & Peter suggest that these early studies are no longer applicable due to the development of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Today, the vast majority of adolescents across western countries have access to the Internet, therefore, encouraging adolescents to communicate and participate more online.

This article suggests that online communication stimulates online self-disclosure, based on Walther’s (1996) hyperpersonal communication theory. This theory of computer-mediated communication is generally characterised by reduced visual, auditory
and contextual cues. Suggesting adolescents become less concerned with how peers/others perceive them and therefore feel fewer inhibitions in disclosing personal topics that are not easily disclosed, such as feelings, worries and vulnerabilities.

The authors go on to state that this is a liberating process, particularly for adolescents that are shy or are self conscious and one in three adolescents are able to self-disclose better online than offline and in particular male adolescents benefit more from online self-disclosure due to face to face inhibitions. Overall, this article suggests internet enhanced online self disclosures enhances the quality of relationships, social connectedness and well-being of adolescents.

**Internet Disclosure**


*Keywords*; self-disclosure, computer-mediated communication, self-awareness, anonymous

Joinson conducted three studies, examining the notion that computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be characterised by high levels of self-disclosure. Findings suggest that significantly higher levels of spontaneous self-disclosure were found in computer-mediated communication compared with face-to-face discussions. Also visual anonymity and heightened private self-awareness also contributed to participants disclosing significantly more information about themselves.
This paper suggests individual anonymity is central to computer-mediated communication. Online communication is often a solo pursuit, and when in a private space individuals can find computer-mediated communication a highly reflective experience. Individuals can focus on inner feelings and emotions and the computer acts as a mirror, reflecting back what has been written about one-self. ‘Under the protective cloak of anonymity, users can express the way they truly feel and think’ (McKenna & Bargh, p26). Therefore suggesting individuals have a greater sense of private self-awareness and a decreased sense of public focus and self-presentation. Other research from this paper suggests adolescents that have a high sense of private self-awareness are more willing to self disclose. Furthermore, visual anonymity reduces the impact of social norms and increases individual personal standards, again suggesting individuals can express the authentic self, which may result in a reduction of conformity to group norms.


Keywords; youth, social networks, personal media, network society, communication

This Norwegian qualitative study explores the personal use of media in maintaining and developing relationships and extending social networks with twenty adolescents. The aim of this study is to understand how young people employ mediated forms of communication to create meaningful social practices. This study is included in this bibliography as this study explores how adolescents
use personal media to extend social networks and how mediated interaction has become increasingly important in the lives of adolescents. This study draws on other research to support the studies findings, suggesting face to face communication is not viewed as automatically superior and that young people may view face to face communication as an extension of online communication rather than vice versa.

Personal media can be defined as tools for interpersonal communication and this has a significant social role in modern societies. Individuals are now often engaged in ‘network societies’ to maintain, develop and extend relationships. Findings suggest that adolescents can express themselves openly and accurately online as they are able to write down their thoughts and feelings, this is particularly useful when dealing with serious or difficult issues. Individuals also have the option of editing or pressing delete, making it easier to express what they think or feel. Other research in this study agrees that self-presentation are more controlled and composed; suggesting online images of the self are often relatively accurate.

Further, the qualitative findings suggest the young people were able to extend their social networks due to perceived safety and relative anonymity. Suggesting young people are likely to view online strangers as safe receivers of personal self-disclosures, as there appears to be no real life consequences and a reduced fear of disapproval or judgement.

In conclusion the author suggests young people juggle online and offline communication in meaningful ways and the quality of mediated communication can differ from face to face, but not by being less meaningful but by enabling other forms of disclosing practices, which may result in initial weak ties becoming stronger through reciprocal self disclosures.

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URL; http://doi.ieeecomputersociety.org/10.1109/HICSS.2008.400

Keywords; Self-disclosure, blogs, social networking sites, reciprocity, equity

This exploratory study investigated the relationship between bloggers’ intended audiences, breadths of self-disclosure and expectations of interpersonal norms; reciprocity and equity. With the growth of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, people’s social spheres are no longer geographically restricted or limited to, one to one communication. Today, technology facilitates with ease the access of growing personal information on a global scale. Blogs are posted in often public places in order ‘to let people know…keeping in touch…and getting the word out’.

This study found people were empowered to maintain blogs and were aware of their intended audiences and expected feedback via comments to their blog entries (reciprocal communication) due to easy access to computers and the Internet and also little technical knowledge is needed. The study found evidence to suggest that people present themselves accurately and realistically and people regularly include personal information. Further findings were that females, more than males aimed to provide and obtain social support in online communities and males were more likely to seek information. It was also found that females had a higher tendency to disclose emotions more than males.

Those that self-disclose choose a specific audience, which conveys personalism, and the tendency to self-disclose feeds
additional disclosures from others through a reciprocity norm. Therefore the bloggers intended audience is an influential factor on the content disclosed, as it is important to be part of a desirable online social setting.

**Privacy**


URL: Compiler unable to locate URL

*Keywords;* social networking, generational, attitudes, information

This article is included in this bibliography as the author attempts to understand the generational divide regarding privacy in the public sphere of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

There is an assumption among many of today’s younger generation that everything should be shared. Attitudes to privacy and information sharing are now defined by the generation in which you belong to. The author’s interview with Mr Veen, a social media designer suggests there is a generational divide regarding privacy within social media. Mr Veen states ‘people older than 25 years think of everything they do on their computer as being private unless they share it, where young people younger than that, think that everything they do on a computer as public unless they choose to make it private”

The author also explores how the availability of personal information is having real consequences on many, this has been mainly linked to employers checking Facebook pages of potential
employees and finding information regarding drink or drug use and inappropriate photographs.

**Morganteen, J. (2010). Do social networking sites keep sexual assault victims silent? Connecticut Post, April 5, 2010**

URL; [http://www.allbusiness.com/education-training/education-administration/14237001-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/education-training/education-administration/14237001-1.html)

*Keywords;* Social networking sites, students, sexual assault

This article is included in this bibliography as the author highlights how other social networking users may create potential problems for sexual assault victims and legal authorities when sexual assault is reported.

Shortly after a Stamford high school security guard was charged with sexual assault, online gossip spread across social networking sites and comment boards on newspaper websites revealing the identity of the 15-year-old victim.

The writer questions whether the Web's capacity for instantaneous and malicious gossip prevents other students coming forward to disclose sexual assault particularly as we now live in the information age, where knowledge and information are readily accessible by anyone.

**Social networking**

**Brisbane Times (2010). Social media making us 'shallow'**  

US experts say, social networking should reduce friction between humans around the world by 2020 but our real life relationships could suffer and become shallower. However, the benefits of social media should "far outweigh" the negative impacts over the next 10 years, according to the Pew Research Centre study. The centre’s Internet & American Life Project and Elon University’s Imagining the Internet Centre surveyed 895 experts, including research scientists, business leaders and entrepreneurs, consultants, authors and technology developers. In this latest study, 85 per cent said the Internet has mostly had a positive effect on their social world - friendships, marriages and other relationships.

Pew released numerous quotes from those experts as they explained how they viewed the evolving social web. William Webb, head of research at Ofcom, the United Kingdom’s Office of Communications states, "The internet has actually helped with human interaction by providing a wider range of ways to communicate, such as Twitter and Facebook" Doc Searls, a fellow with Harvard’s Berkman Centre for Internet & Society, basically echoed Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg’s belief that the internet and social media will bring the world closer together.

However, other experts consider the drawbacks of social networking. "Social networking encourages people to have a greater number of much shallower friendships," said Gervase Markham, a Mozilla Foundation programmer. And, Tiffany Shlain, a filmmaker, artist and founder of the Webby Awards, said the struggle to be with "the important people in our lives will only intensify by 2020. By then, the idea of turning off technology is going to be the equivalent of trying to stay dry when you are under water", she said.

URL; [http://nms.sagepub.com/content/10/3/393](http://nms.sagepub.com/content/10/3/393)

*Keywords;* affordances, identity, online communication, online risk, privacy, social networking sites, teenagers, youth

For many youths, online social networking has become an integral means of managing one’s identity, lifestyle and social relationships. The language regarding social relationships is being reframed; today individuals can construct profiles, message friends on their ‘wall’ and block or add people to their network. Critical scholars and media discourses suggest that at best social networking is a waste of time and socially isolating and at worst paedophiles are able to groom children and teenagers are lured into suicide pacts while parents believe they are doing their homework.

Livingston argues that academics are usefully challenging media hype through keeping pace with the social practices of youths using new innovative media. Rapidly expanding empirical research is examining how individuals create personal profiles and networks and also how youths participate in online communities. Also Livingston suggests that there is no longer a simple distinction between offline and online practices as online technologies are becoming embedded into everyday life.

This UK qualitative study aims to explore teenagers’ practices of social networking in order to uncover the connections between online opportunity and risk, arguing that there is a complex relation between opportunity and risk which is not just distinctive to the internet rather it is a feature of adolescence. Furthermore, this article aims to
understand teenagers’ conception of ‘friends’ within the social networking context, through examining how online identity and peer relations are shaped by both peer culture and affordances (visual cues) of networking software, the purpose to show that online opportunities and risks are interconnected.

Findings suggest that teenagers’ strategies for representing the self vary considerably and it should not be assumed that profiles are simply information about the individual but often the position of the individual within the peer network was more significant than the personal information provided. Livingston findings suggest teenagers are concerned about privacy and self disclosures and are required to make thoughtful decisions about what, how and to whom they reveal personal information, drawing their own boundaries and making deliberate choices that match their mode of communication and in particular communicative content.

Furthermore, findings suggest that although the teenagers described their social networking practices in terms of freely taken choices, it appears they were constrained by peer ‘norms’ and by the affordances of the technological interface and that representations of ‘adult society’ (parents, media) play a lesser role in alerting teenager’s to the risks of strangers threats or privacy.


*Keywords;* Social networking, children, teenagers, opportunities, risks
Children, teenagers and young people worldwide have rapidly adopted social networking sites, enabling new opportunities for the presentation of the self, learning, construction of a wide circle of relationships, and the management of privacy and intimacy. On the other hand, there are also concerns that social networking increases the likelihood of new risks to the self, these centring on loss of privacy, bullying, harmful contacts and more.

This article reviews recent findings regarding children and teenagers’ social networking practices in order to identify key recommendations for future research and public policy.

Most social networking sites are intended for teenagers and adults, though some have no lower age limit. 2007, UK research suggests 42 percent of 8 – 17 year olds had a social networking profile. Further research in 2008 suggests most users visit social networking sites daily or every other day. The authors suggest social networking sites create new opportunities for young people to be self-expressive, learn, and communicate. The authors acknowledge that ‘young people’s desire to connect with peers anywhere, anytime – to stay in touch, express themselves and share experiences’ is the driving force for online and mobile communication.

The authors and other researchers suggest social networking sites enable teenagers to overcome the embarrassment of face-to-face communication through asynchronous and noncommittal interactions. Therefore the negotiation of flirting, misinterpretation or innuendos become more controllable or manageable online than face-to-face interactions. Social networking has become a means for young people to share advice and support with their peers and those who do not engage in social networking miss out on more than just communication.

The authors suggest new opportunities are associated with risks. The UK’s Home Office Task force on Child Protection and the Internet have identified risks to children participating in social

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networking; these include bullying, harassment, exposure to harmful content, theft of personal information, sexual grooming and more. Therefore the authors suggest that the more opportunities teenagers take up online the more risks they are likely to encounter, within this, the more policy makers try to limit risks the more it may also limit teenagers opportunities. The authors also note that a part of adolescence is of taking risks, pushing boundaries and seeking out new opportunities.

Research within this article suggests that while young people do experience real risks within social networking sites, dangerous risks from sexual predators are very rare. Individuals are more likely to experience misuse of their personal information by spammers and fraudsters or their reputations or future employment prospects being damaged through young people inadvertently releasing personal information or photographs.

The authors recommend that children and parents can not be solely responsible for addressing online risks and that safer internet programmes or ‘safety by design’ could allow manufacturers or software designers to build safety protection into the interface rather than relying on safety awareness and digital literacy skills of parents and children. The authors further recommend that schools incorporate media education into the classroom so that children’s knowledge can keep up with the fast-changing practices of the technological age.


Keywords; Cyber bullies, online communities
This news article is included in this bibliography as this story highlights how online communities can be powerful and instigate online communities to create online social and behavioural change.

An American university student who was the victim of several bullying attacks has been supported by an unlikely source; notorious cyber bullies. Over 20 videos of the student being bullied by his fellow students were posted on You Tube. The videos were further posted on the 4chan website, an underground image-based forum, infamous for launching online smear campaigns against vulnerable targets.

However the 4chan community rallied together to campaign to save the student from further bullying and harassment. Posting an email template requesting help for the student and urging users to send it to the college dean and users posted names and contact information that they believed would lead them to the bullies. Other users also suggested sending death threats to the bullies in order to force them to make a apology on camera and pay the victim for his troubles.


URL; [http://nms.sagepub.com/content/12/2/197](http://nms.sagepub.com/content/12/2/197)

*Keywords*; Content analysis, internet safety, MySpace, online communities, social networking, victimisation, youth

Social networking sites have grown rapidly in number and popularity in recent years, individuals are able to construct personal profiles and socially interact with friends or others with ease. Youths have embraced the concepts of creating ‘virtual presences’ which has driven the success of social networking sites such as MySpace.
American surveys in 2007 (Pew institute) showed that 94 percent of teenagers used the Internet, and of those, 93 percent go online from multiple locations (school, home, library, a friend’s house). A 2006 Pew Survey, reports that 55 percent of American teenagers had online profiles and 85 percent were MySpace profiles.

MySpace had a significant increase in popularity between 2004 and 2007, more so than any other social networking site, estimates suggest that in 2006; approximately 230,000 new accounts were created daily. Research suggests, sites such as MySpace are beneficial to adolescents due to adolescents being introduced to differing viewpoints and perspectives and also social networking sites can help adolescents to develop and refine their self-identity. Furthermore, the authors and other researchers suggest 'youth in the 21st century lack a real-world venue in which they can hang out like youth of the previous generation did, therefore have turned to cyberspace to meet and interact with others in a relatively adult –free environment’ (p200).

Considering these positive aspects the authors also consider the negative benefits of adolescents accessing MySpace, as this site was ‘singled out as a particularly perilous environment’ (p200). Major concerns have been raised of sexual predators scouring youth’s public profiles in order to determine their next victim. Controversial estimates suggest that over 50,000 sexual predators are on the Internet every minute of each day, highlighting real risks in cyberspace for young people. Since the initial study MySpace and many others (educators, parents, Governments…) have introduced efforts to promote Internet safety to inform and educate youths to interact safely in cyberspace.

In this article, the authors revisit their 2006 study and re-analyse the content of the 2423 MySpace profiles one year later and also review statistics that illustrate the growth of online connectivity and communication among youth. The author’s aim of this study was
to determine if safety messages are being heard or the new strategies being employed are affecting the way youths are using MySpace (extent to which adolescent profiles had become more or less private).

The main findings from this research suggest that youths are abandoning MySpace or creating new profiles using a different email address or profile name. The research suggests that more youths are setting their profiles to private (13% increase). Therefore, suggesting that youths have learned to be more responsible and guarded with their information.

Further, the author’s found that a common concern of adults is that youth are including inappropriate content or pictures in their MySpace profiles. The findings from this research suggests that only a relatively small proportion of profiles included swear words, pictures of youths in a swimsuit or underwear, evidence of alcohol consumption, tobacco use or marijuana use. Considering these overall findings the research suggests there is a general trend towards safer and smarter online social networking.